2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

888 at us with his rheumy eyes. His brain was too far gone to take in much of what was said and after making a remark, which was a sinister meaningless croak rather than human speech, he would totter off again to add a few more turns to his credit. He always reminded me of a desiccated old colonel: perhaps in some previous incarnation he had snored away long hours in some comfortable London club. Anyhow, I like to think so.

136 Lingtem Monastery has no permanent inmates. It does, however, harbour large colonies of rats and fleas. I thought at first that the nightly scufflings might be some form of psychic disturbance; and as for the fleas, once one had been thoroughly bitten they ceased to cause further annoyance.

133 The view from the monastery is, in my opinion, unparalleled anywhere in the Himalaya. The building faces due north, and directly in front of us, on the far side of the river, was a splendidly wooded ridge, the top of which was still under snow when we first arrived. Away to the left we had an uninterrupted view of the Kinchinjunga peaks, with the top of Seniolchum just visible a little to one side. This in itself was a sufficiently remarkable sight: but away to the right we also had a clear view of all the peaks forming the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet. In the centre of those was Pau-hunri, here called Nahrem Hlo, and thought
[823] to be the loom of Nazong Nyu, a mythical personage who appears in many Lepcha stories.

[788] Outside the monastery was a row of prayer-flags, and a
351 number of small prayer-drums had been let into one of the walls. These could be turned by the pious whenever they circled round the building. A little below was a small bamboo grove, which contained one particularly handsome tree, which I would sometimes watch for hours at a stretch,
[322 especially when the weather was stormy. Why, I wondered,
137] do we use the wood of this most beautiful of all trees to make the most hideous of all furniture? The Lepcha uses a great deal of bamboo in one way and another, but in his hands the finished product never looks shoddy and ugly. On

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

difficult. Now came the figure of the god Chumden-De. This is always the first god that a pupil learns to draw; not because it is considered particularly easy, but because it was the first to be incarnated. His drawing of Chumden-De was coloured, but there is no formal instruction in painting, since it consists in merely filling in spaces with solid colour, no attempt being made to suggest the play of light and shade. During the early stage he was never allowed to draw without a copy, but by the time he finished he had made so many drawings of the various members of the Lamaist pantheon that he was able to draw them from memory without a mistake. His course finished with the painting of a picture known as Jimbong-Ngernga, a complicated group of twenty-five gods, one of which had no less than sixteen hands and legs, not to mention its eight ungainly heads. This, he said, was very difficult, and he has now forgotten how to draw it. During his nine years at Phensang the Hlaribu learnt the details of several hundred gods: he can no longer remember all of these, but by reference to a book is still able to produce any particular one for which he may be asked. He might almost be described as an "Academician" in outlook; for he does not believe in introducing any sort of individuality into his pictures, and thinks it best to stick to the rules. He does not admit the possibility of difference in two pictures of the same subject if painted by two different artists: since the subject is the same one cannot be better than the other. He thinks, however, that paintings made in Tibet are better than those from Sikkim, since the tradition came originally from the former country. In Tibet it is usual for an artist to devote his whole life to the craft, whereas here in Sikkim it is merely a side line. In addition to making pictures the Hlaribu was [322] also taught to do wood-carving, but not to make images, which are usually imported from either Tibet or Bhutan. Carving is almost entirely confined to decorating the mouldings of windows and doors. This is afterwards picked out in colour, usually in a combination of red, blue, and green. The colours are generally crude and violently contrasted,

8:Nebesky-Wojkowitz--1 E-5 (1950-1953) 1953 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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/269/ New Acquisitions from Sikkim and Tibet

by René Nebesky-Wojkowitz

One of the results of my three-years of ethnographic research in the Sikkim-Tibet border region, which I concluded in February, 1953, was the establishment of collections for the Ethnographic Museum /Museum für Völkerkunde/ in Vienna. The majority of the acquired objects are household implements, articles of clothing, ceremonial paraphernalia, and weapons of the Lepchas, the original inhabitants of the Himalaya kingdom of Sikkim. The Lepcha tribe, related in race and language to the Tibetans, has in the course of the last three centuries suffered a progressive narrowing of its living area as a result of the penetration of stronger neighbors. It now numbers only 30,000 members, most of whom live in Sikkim proper. A few scattered Lepcha settlements are still to be found in the vicinity of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and the Nepalese district of Ilam, and in two valleys of Bhutan. Because of extensive adoption of the customs of Nepalese immigrants, who today form the largest population group of Sikkim, the Lepchas have sacrificed many of their native characteristics. The establishment of this first Lepcha collection therefore was very difficult, for most of the objects formerly used by the Lepchas have been replaced in more recent times by products of Nepalese, Indian, or even European origin.

The household implements included in the collection are made for the most part of bamboo; we find among them variously shaped vessels, spoons and spatulas, a churn-staff /Butterstampfer/, baskets, a grain riddle, strainers, a scale with one balance as well as wooden dishes of varying sizes, which are used for the preparation of millet beer, the alcoholic beverage preferred by the Lepchas. The tribe's art of weaving, which today is practically extinct, is demonstrated by a hand loom containing an almost completed piece of weaving; it shows—just as a second, already completed strip of weaving does